

Graduation Plan

Master of Science Architecture, Urbanism & Building Sciences



Graduation Plan: All tracks

Submit your Graduation Plan to the Board of Examiners (Examencommissie-BK@tudelft.nl), Mentors and Delegate of the Board of Examiners one week before P2 at the latest.

The graduation plan consists of at least the following data/segments:

Personal information	
Name	Kaspar Elias ter Glane
Student number	4918215

Studio		
Name / Theme	Global Housing / Architecture of Transition in the Bangladesh Delta	
Main mentor	Nelson Mota	Architecture
Second mentor	Ludovica Cassina	Technical Building Design
Research Mentor	Antonio Paoletti	Architecture
Argumentation of choice of the studio	<p>The Global Housing graduation studio focuses on some of the most pressing challenges facing architectural designers worldwide. In many countries that are rapidly urbanizing and/or developing economically, the demand for new housing outpaces the supply capacity of design professionals. Figuring out systems for supplying quality design to the many people in need is one of the key themes of the studio. I believe this is a problem area where even small improvements in design methodology can have a huge impact on countless people's lives and this is why I was particularly motivated to join this studio. Bangladesh (the focus of this year's research) is one of the most densely populated countries in the world and is rapidly urbanizing and developing economically. According to a survey by the Commonwealth Association of Architects there is only one architect per 50 000 of the population. Therefore I also feel that my key interest is particularly relevant to this year's theme of "Architecture of Transition in the Bangladesh Delta".</p>	

Graduation project	
Title of the graduation project	Genesis Metropolis (Subtitle: Creating a Generative Architectural Language for the City of Sylhet)
Goal	
Location:	Keane Bridge, Sylhet, Bangladesh
The posed problem,	Rural-urban migration has brought new opportunities but also significant challenges to Bangladesh. Attaining

lower-middle income status in 2014 (World Bank, 2022) as well as its imminent graduation from the UN list of least developed countries (LDCs) in 2026 (United Nations, 2021) are significant markers of progress for the country. They suggest that at least in economic terms, the downsides related to this demographic trend are outweighed by the benefits.

Of course, urbanisation is a large and multi-faceted subject — a global phenomenon affecting not only Bangladesh — and its merits and demerits are hotly debated across multiple disciplines. For instance an investigation into the relationship between urbanisation and living standards by the International Institute for Environment and Development concluded, perhaps unsurprisingly, that “[t]here is no simple linear relationship between urbanization and economic growth, or between city size and productivity” (Turok & McGranahan, 2013, p.1). It is clear that, when even the economic benefits are hard to establish clearly, questions of a more qualitative nature, such as how urbanisation impacts people’s wellbeing, cannot be answered simply.

However, in architectural terms, Bangladesh faces some very clear and present challenges from urbanisation. Whereas rural societies have handed down the skills for people to construct their own homes and shape their surroundings for themselves, modern cities rely on new materials and construction techniques, that require different skills and training to master. At the same time many of the jobs on offer in urban areas are of a different nature to those in agricultural areas. Often they do not require manual labour skills.

Thus while modern construction is becoming more reliant on technology and specialised skillsets the knowledge of traditional construction techniques as well as basic construction competency that comes with manual labour and agricultural practice is being lost. Additionally, shifting public perceptions play a role. For instance, traditional materials such as adobe have come to be associated with poverty (Monzur, 2018 p. 326).

A survey by the Commonwealth Association of Architects (CAA) shows that in Bangladesh there is only one trained architect per 50,000 of the population (CAA, 2018, p.19), with only Uganda having a significantly lower figure among the 15 countries surveyed. It found that the most significant shortfalls of trained building professionals were occurring “in many countries of the Commonwealth which are also urbanising most rapidly” (CAA, 2018, p.18). This shows that while a similar challenge is faced in other parts of the world, it is a very pressing problem in Bangladesh.

With the loss of traditional building knowledge and the small pool of building professionals able to deliver constructions to high modern standards, many in Bangladesh find themselves in less than ideal housing situations. Most obviously there are the number of people living in slums, who generally have no choice but to build for themselves. This still comprises around 50% of all people in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2024).

However it may also include housing that meets adequate (if not high) technical standards in terms of durability, service provision, safety, etc., but where little thought has gone

into the qualitative ('subjective') aspects of the design, for instance where an architect has not been involved.

The dangers to health and wellbeing of housing that does not meet technical standards are generally well documented and their mechanisms understood. These can also be termed 'quantitative' standards in that they are based on measurable criteria (such as durability of materials, floor area provision, heating capacity, etc.). Such a standard could be, for instance, the provision of an adequate sewage system, which, when not present (as in most slums) predictably leads to increased risk of disease.

It is also widely understood, and increasingly supported by evidence, that there are qualitative criteria in the design of houses that can affect the wellbeing and even the health of inhabitants. However solid evidence and precise mechanisms of action are much harder to establish (than with quantitative criteria), since the effect of qualitative aspects of design exert themselves in the minds of users. Nevertheless the growing body of evidence in support of biophilic design principles exemplifies that it is possible to investigate qualitative aspects of design and to establish probable causation, if not mechanism of action. Among other things, biophilic designs have been found to provide psychological restoration (Berto and Barbiero, 2017; Gillis and Gatersleben, 2015; Lee et al., 2015; Yin et al., 2018), reduce stress (Browning et al., 2014), increase healing rates (Abdelaal and Soebarto, 2019), enhance positive emotions (Mandasari and Gamal, 2017) and encourage physical activity (Korpela et al., 2017; Wallmann-Sperlich et al., 2019).

Indeed it is a fundamental justification of the role of architect, or lead designer, that they are able to deliver quality in a design that goes beyond technical performance (such as can be delivered by engineers) to address the feelings of the user. By understanding, not just what they need to survive, but what makes them comfortable, not just what make a shelter but what makes a home.

Therefore it is believed by the author that meeting the housing challenge in the context of Bangladesh and its rapid urbanisation requires broadly three things to ensure success: firstly achieving scale (i.e. building sufficient numbers of dwellings); secondly meeting quantitative standards (e.g. durability, sanitation, services, safety ect.); and thirdly meeting qualitative standards (e.g. connection to nature, sensitivity to context, sense of community etc.). Classically today, this task falls to the architect. However, the impossibility of this challenge becomes apparent when we consider that each architect in Bangladesh would need to design for approximately 50,000 people. At least if they personally want to ensure a good standard of design.

While it may conceivably be possible for the architect, (with the help of engineers, contractors etc.) to build for 50,000 people, they will surely not be able to respond to any individual requirements or preferences. One family might prioritise education and want big bedrooms for the kids where they have room to study (at the cost of having a smaller living room). Another might be keen gardeners and need a space to propagate seeds. One might love music and need a space that can be soundproofed. These might be considered more qualitative needs, beyond the basic functional necessities.

But in order to build sufficient units, the architect will have to focus on standardisation and repetition. They will have to largely ignore qualitative needs.

Alternatively the architect can relinquish design control to the user(s). The extreme scenario of this is the slum, where users must build for themselves and there is no oversight of an architect or, often, any building professional at all. While these dwellings fall far below adequate technical standards and the terrible living conditions in slums must be acknowledged, many slums also possess a strong sense of community and a vitality that may be missing from more formal settlements. Could this be because in slums, while very limited in means, people nevertheless have the freedom to build for themselves? That they therefore have the means to address at least some of their felt, qualitative needs, as well as the basic needs of survival?

Investigating and systematising the qualitative requirements of good housing is a challenging task, since it is a very difficult subject area to study empirically. This is because it is a topic that deals largely with human psychology. Furthermore, the built environment contains a vast number of variables which might have an impact on people's health and wellbeing. Many are hard if not impossible to isolate for the purpose of study. Therefore, while this research will touch upon empirical findings, it will focus on theoretical frameworks as well as non-empirical approaches. It will seek to establish, through assessing the coherence of theoretical arguments on the one hand, and weight of consensus on the other, where the starting points of a systematic and empirical approach to qualitative design of housing may lie.

	<p>Simultaneously, it will seek to justify through this process, that a systematic approach to achieving qualitative design standards is a necessary part of solving the wider problem of designing housing for the greater number.</p>
<p>research questions and</p>	<p>Main Question: How can we build housing for the many in Sylhet, especially rural-urban migrants, while ensuring technical and qualitative standards?</p> <p>Sub-questions:</p> <p>1 <i>What is the right balance between control by the architect and by the end user to allow for building at scale while also ensuring build quality?</i></p> <p>2 <i>Is there a systematic way to achieve qualitative standards in design, which can be scaled, since relying on the experience and intuition of the architect cannot easily be scaled?</i></p> <p>3 <i>What can we learn from traditional rural Sylheti practices that might ensure qualitative design standards for housing of rural-urban migrants in Sylhet?</i></p>
<p>design assignment in which these result.</p>	<p>Main goal:</p> <p>Develop a systematic approach to the problem of supplying housing for the greater number in Sylhet.</p> <p>Research aims:</p> <p>To explore theoretical approaches to the problem of housing for the greater number with the aim of synthesising a theoretical framework.</p>

To explore building traditions in Sylhet which have allowed people to build homes for themselves without the need of architects (in particular in the rural traditions to which most people belonged) with the aim of:

- 1) Preserving this knowledge and making it explicit so that it can be passed on, rather than being lost in the process of modernisation and as part of the rural-urban demographic shift
- 2) Allowing rural culture and traditions to be translated into the urban context so that it can adapt and incorporate modern techniques
- 3) To create a building system that empowers people to build for themselves
- 4) To create a building system that incorporates local social and cultural patterns in order to be a 'good fit' for the people and improve their subjective wellbeing and sense of belonging

These research aims are to inform a housing project on a site on the southern banks of the Surma River in Sylhet, comprising approximately 2.6 hectares, including the area of the Sweeper Community, the riverfront and southern landing point of the Keane Bridge and the local lumberyard.

The project is for a mixed use development that will seek to rehouse the Sweeper Community (c.a. 25 families) and the Muslim families (c.a. 40) currently living on site, as well as providing housing for other low- and middle-income families, and considering the broader connections of the site to the city and its potential to bring value to the wider community, for instance through the development of the riverfront. Additionally the economic

	<p>model of the project will be considered and the role of workplaces, such as the local lumberyard in that model.</p> <p>While the research will seek to inform the design, the specific conditions of the Keane Bridge site and the local community will also serve to inform the wider applicability (or lack thereof) of the design methodology developed through the research.</p>
--	---

[This should be formulated in such a way that the graduation project can answer these questions.
The definition of the problem has to be significant to a clearly defined area of research and design.]

Process

Method description

The initial phase of research is to be conducted before visiting Bangladesh without access to first hand source material.

8.1 Establish a theoretical framework by precedent research

Study books, papers and other written materials on the topic of 'housing for the greater number'. Explore the historical development of ideas and identify strengths and weaknesses of different theories by comparative analysis and reading critiques. Evaluate case study projects to determine the success or failure of underlying theory.

8.2 Research architectural traditions in Bangladesh, particularly in the rural context

Study books, papers and other written materials on the topic of Bangladeshi vernacular architecture. This can include study of poetry and other artistic traditions that have shaped cultural and building practices and can involve analysis of photographic evidence, the drawing of diagrams to illustrate findings from written sources, analysis of social practices such as *purdah* and bathing rituals in the *Ghat* etc.

8.3 Compile questions in preparation of surveying locals in Bangladesh

Study precedent patterns from *A Pattern Language, Village for Gujarat, India*, and *The Production of Houses*. Consult contacts with first-hand experience of living in Bangladesh. Research in advance economic and social goals that will form part of the list of requirements for dwelling in the Sylheti context.

The second phase occurs on location.

8.4 Gather first-hand photographic evidence

Take as many pictures as possible of dwellings, exterior and interior (with permission). These can be analysed to obtain the implicit dwelling requirements of the inhabitants which may not be mentioned (see *Village for Gujarat, India*)

8.5 Conduct survey of locals

With the aim of obtaining a list of requirements for dwelling in rural and semi-urban contexts. Also to gain general insight into cultural and social attitudes. Include survey questions about material expression and preferences, since research indicates that traditional materials and techniques sometimes face prejudicial associations with poverty compared to modern materials. Also seek to establish where possible, interdependencies of different requirements in advance.

Final phase on return to The Netherlands.

8.6 Synthesise survey findings

Create a list of all requirements that have been identified, explicit, implicit and socially/economically driven. Establish interdependencies. Perform a computational analysis to find groupings. Use this as a basis for proposed patterns for the Sylheti context.

8.7 Produce example diagrams and drawings

Having synthesised a set of patterns for Sylhet, format organise and illustrate them in a pattern language structure. Combine these where necessary with existing patterns to create a sufficient 'language' to construct a model of a sample dwelling.

8.9 Use this proto pattern language to inform the studio design project

Base design decisions and built forms on findings from the research. Inform the application of the patterns with principles for *The Nature of Order*.

8.10 Critical appraisal

Evaluate the successes and failures of the research.

Literature and general practical references

The key reference texts include: *Village for Gujarat, India, A City is Not a Tree, The Production of Houses, The Nature of Order*, and *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*, by Alexander, C., et al.; furthermore, for the understanding of the Bangladeshi context: *Identification of archetypical vernacular architectural form of Bengal*, by Tabassum, M., *Architecture Within the Folk Tradition*, by Saif-ul-Haq, *Urbanisation in Bangladesh: Challenges and Way Forward*, by Roy, S., *Re-Thinking Mud House: Countering the Gradual Shift in Traditional Vernacular Architectural Practice in Northern Bangladesh* by Monzur, N.; as well as the *Habitat Bill of Rights* as published in *Ekistics*.

The theory formulated in *A Pattern Language* and the software 'design patterns' movement which it inspired is a key influence on my research plan.

Key built works and construction systems studied as part of the studio are: the Peabody Square estate in Blackfriars, London, by Darbishire, H., the 'Bangla Baton' construction style of Bangladesh, and the Mexicali Housing Project described in *The Production of Houses*, by Alexander, C., et al..

20th Century Architecture. (2021). *TEAM X*. Architecture-History.org. [http://architecture-history.org/schools/TEAM%20X%20\(NETHERLANDS\).html](http://architecture-history.org/schools/TEAM%20X%20(NETHERLANDS).html)

Aga Khan Development Network. (2023, July 6). *Kampung Kali Cho-de*. Aga Khan Development Network. <https://the.akdn/en/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture/akaa/kampung-kali-cho-de>

Alexander, C. (1962). *Village for Gujarat, India*. Pergamon Press. <https://christopher-alexander-ces-archive.org/project/master-plan-for-village-of-bavra/>

Alexander, C. (2002). *The Nature of Order, Book One: The Phenomenon of Life: An Essay on the Art of Building and The Nature of the Universe*. Center For Environmental Structure. <https://books.google.nl/books?id=jS8NEAAAQBAJ>

Alexander, C. (2017). *A City is Not a Tree: 50th Anniversary Edition*. Sustasis Press/Off The Common Books. <https://books.google.nl/books?id=k9ovDwAAQBAJ>

Alexander, C., Davis, H., Martinez, J., & Corner, D. (1985). *The Production of Houses* (Vol. 4). Oxford University Press.

Alexander, C., Ishikawa, S., & Silverstein, M. (1977). *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction*. Oxford Univ. Pr.

- Ali, A. (1999). Climate change impacts and adaptation assessment in Bangladesh. *Climate Research*, 12, 109–116. <https://doi.org/10.3354/cr012109>
- Basak, P. (2021). *Inundation Land Types Map of Bangladesh*. Blogspot.com. <https://maps-of-bangladesh.blogspot.com/2010/12/inundation-land-types-map-of-bangladesh.html>
- Commonwealth Association of Architects. (2018, April 15). *CAA Survey of the Architectural Profession in the Commonwealth*. Issuu. https://issuu.com/comarchitect.org/docs/caa_survey_of_the_architectural_pro
- Deyong, S. (2014). An Architectural Theory of Relations: Sigfried Giedion and Team X. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 73(2), 226–247.
- Fitting, P. (2002). Urban Planning/Utopian Dreaming: Le Corbusier's Chandigarh Today. *Utopian Studies*, 13(1), 69–93. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20718410>
- Hays, J. (2022, February). *LAND AND GEOGRAPHY OF BANGLADESH: RIVERS, DELTAS, EROSION AND ACCRETION | Facts and Details*. Factsanddetails.com. https://factsanddetails.com/south-asia/Bangladesh/Nature_Environment_Animals_Bangladesh/entry-8204.html
- Hedrick, S. (2019). *Water In Crisis - Spotlight Bangladesh*. The Water Project. <https://thewaterproject.org/water-crisis/water-in-crisis-bangladesh>
- Hopkins, R. (2010, December 23). *An interview with "Pattern Language" author Christopher Alexander*. Resilience. <https://www.resilience.org/stories/2010-12-23/interview-pattern-language-author-christopher-alexander/>
- Kohn, W. (2002). *Archives: Wendy Kohn Interview*. [Www.patternlanguage.com](http://www.patternlanguage.com). <https://www.patternlanguage.com/archive/kohn.html>
- Le Corbusier. (1923). *Towards A New Architecture*. Brewer, Warren & Putnam. (Original work published 1923)
- Mateo, J. L. (2016, February 9). *PREVI Lima 1969*. Transfer: Global Architecture Platform. <https://www.transfer-arch.com/reference/previ-lima-1969/>
- Monzur, N. (2018). *Re-Thinking Mud House: Countering the Gradual Shift in Traditional Vernacular*

Architectural Practice in Northern Bangladesh. *International Journal of Architectural Research: ArchNet-IJAR*, 12(2), 319. <https://doi.org/10.26687/archnet-ijar.v12i2.1530>

Mozaffari, A., & Westbrook, N. B. (2015, May 22). *A return to the beginnings of Regionalism: Shushtar New Town seen in the light of the 2nd International Congress of Architects, Persepolis, Iran 1974*. Academia.edu.

https://www.academia.edu/12521344/A_return_to_the_beginnings_of_Regionalism_Shushtar_New_Town_seen_in_the_light_of_the_2nd_International_Congress_of_Architects_Persepolis_Iran_1974

Mumford, E. (2001). *The Emergence of Mat or Field Buildings* (H. Sarkis, P. Allard, & T. Hyde, Eds.; pp. 48–65). Prestel.

NASA. (2018, July 31). *World of Change: Padma River*. Earthobservatory.nasa.gov. <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/world-of-change/PadmaRiver>

National Committee for Human Settlements, Government of Iran, & Ekistics. (1976). Habitat Bill of Rights. *Ekistics*, 42(252), 302–308. JSTOR. <http://www.jstor.org.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/stable/43620469>

Pedret, A. (2005, December 22). *CIAM IX: discussing the charter of habitat*. Team10online.org. <http://team10online.org/team10/meetings/1953-Aix.htm>

Rahman, A. (2012, March 20). *..BCAS: Article .*. Wwww.bcas.net. https://www.bcas.net/article-full-desc.php?article_id=11

Rahman, M. M., Ali, M. R., Oliver, Hanif, M. A., Uddin, M. Z., Tamim-Ul-Hasan, Saha, K. K., Islam, M. H., & Md Moniruzzaman. (2021). Farm mechanization in Bangladesh: A review of the status, roles, policy, and potentials. *Journal of Agriculture and Food Research*, 6, 100225. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jafr.2021.100225>

Roy, S. (2021, November 12). *URBANISATION IN BANGLADESH: CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD*. 23rd ASEF Summer University. https://asef.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ASEFSU23-Background-Paper_Sustainable-Urbanisation-in-Bangladesh-Dhaka.pdf

Saif-ul-Haq. (1994). Architecture Within the Folk Tradition: A Representation from Bangladesh.

Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review, 5(2), 61–72. JSTOR.

<http://www.jstor.org.tudelft.idm.oclc.org/stable/41757171>

Sanyam Bahga, & Raheja, G. (2018). An account of critical regionalism in diverse building types in postcolonial Indian architecture. *Frontiers of Architectural Research*, 7, 4.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2018.09.001>

Sarup, P. (2024, May 13). *Le Corbusier's Chandigarh: Bold Vision or a Modernist Failure?* AD Middle East. <https://www.admiddleeast.com/story/le-corbusiers-chandigarh-bold-vision-or-a-modernist-failure>

Sedighi, M., & Varma, R. (2018). Framing a new discourse on the notion of habitat in transforming societies. *International Planning History Society Proceedings*, 18(1), 1231–1241.

<https://doi.org/10.7480/iphs.2018.1.2763>

Sisson, P. (2017, April 10). *The faded glory of India's modernist utopian city*. Curbed.

<https://archive.curbed.com/2017/4/10/15243458/chandigarh-le-corbusier-modernist-architecture-planned-city>

Smithson, A., & Team 10. (1974). *Team 10 Primer*. Cambridge, Mit Press. (Original work published 1968)

Smithson, A., & Team 10. (1975). Team 10 at Royaumont 1962. *Architectural Design*, 11, 664–689.

Tabassum, M. (2019). *Identification of archetypical vernacular architectural form of Bengal*.

<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:214436636>

Turok, I., & McGranahan, G. (2013). Urbanization and economic growth: The arguments and evidence for Africa and Asia. *Environment and Urbanization*, 25(2), 465–482.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247813490908>

United Nations. (2021, November 11). *Bangladesh Graduation Status | LDC Portal - International Support Measures for Least Developed Countries*. www.un.org.

<https://www.un.org/ldcportal/content/bangladesh-graduation-status>

United Nations, DESA, Population Division. (n.d.). *World Population Prospects - Population Division*

- *United Nations*. Population.un.org. Retrieved October 31, 2024, from

<https://population.un.org/wpp/Graphs/DemographicProfiles/Line/50>

van den Heuvel, D. (2006). Team 10 riddles: A few notes on mythopoiesis, discourse, and epistemology. In M. Risselada & D. van den Heuvel (Eds.), *Team 10, keeping the language of modern architecture alive* (pp. 174–205). Delft University of Technology.

van den Heuvel, D., & Risselada, M. (2005, December 22). *Team 10 Introduction: Looking into the mirror of Team 10*. Team10online.org. <http://team10online.org/team10/introduction.html>

van Eyck, A. (2008). *Collected articles and other writings 1947-1998* (V. Ligtelijn & F. Strauven, Eds.). SUN.

Wannathepsakul, N. (2020). Comics: An alternative visualization tool for post-rationalist architecture. *Journal of Architectural/Planning Research and Studies (JARS)*, 17, 1–16.
<https://doi.org/10.56261/jars.v17i2.208816>

Wolpert, L., Jessell, T., Lawrence, P., Meyerowitz, E., Robertson, E., & Smith, J. (1998). *Principles Of Development*.

World Bank. (2022). *The World by Income and Region*. The World Bank.
<https://datatopics.worldbank.org/world-development-indicators/the-world-by-income-and-region.html>

World Bank Group. (2015). *World Bank Open Data*. World Bank Open Data.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?end=2023&locations=BD&start=2013>

World Bank Group. (2018). *World Bank Open Data*. World Bank Open Data.
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?end=2023&locations=BD&start=1960&view=chart>

World Bank Group. (2024). *Population living in slums (% of urban population) - Bangladesh | Data*. Data.worldbank.org. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.POP.SLUM.UR.ZS?locations=BD>

Reflection

1. What is the relation between your graduation (project) topic, the studio topic (if applicable), your master track (A,U,BT,LA,MBE), and your master programme (MSc AUBS)?

My graduation topic deals with the theme of housing for deprived communities and an approach to empowering communities to build for themselves while ensuring modern quantitative and qualitative standards. It seeks to address the gap between supply of skilled design professionals and public demand for quality housing, by proposing an intermediary system, a design language that can empower both the professional and the lay person. It does this through an understanding that the design of a quality built environment for a community is an ongoing process, a continual 'transition', that can not be captured through static descriptive programs (such as drawings or models of a 'final' outcome) alone, but only by generative programs. As such it deals with a problem that is central to the challenge of building good housing in many, many communities globally as well as the theme of 'Architecture of Transition'.

Furthermore it is necessarily relevant to my master track Architecture as it deals with the construction of buildings and the built environment and involves concrete building proposals.

2. What is the relevance of your graduation work in the larger social, professional and scientific framework.

My work seeks to empower communities to build for themselves with design professionals in a supportive and collaborative role rather than in a dictatorial position. As such it acknowledges the agency of the people and respects their social values and norms, proposing that the end user usually has the best idea of the kind of built environment that suits them. It explores what the role of the professional in the construction of housing is, and should be, and the proper relation to the end user. Finally it proposes a systematic approach to address the challenge of building for the greater number, based on a theoretical framework. By seeking a systematic approach and formulating hypotheses based on theory, it moves the discussion further into the field of testability, which is the proper domain of science.